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there is in no capital in Europe a stream which presents such natural beauties and holds forth such an opportunity for the people as this stream, which, running for miles through a government park, to be lost amid dump heaps, suddenly emerges again like the fountain of Arethusa in the midst of beauty and charm.

The advantages and, indeed, the necessity of such a connecting link between the parks to the north and the south of the city are too obvious to require argument. The capital of the Nation, instead of lagging behind in the matter of parks, should lead in this as in all other requirements of a great modern city. But this is merely incidental. The true principle is that this capital of our people should represent to them what Athens was to Greece; what Rome was to Italy.

The Greeks had a theory that there was a direct connection between beauty

in surroundings and beauty in the race which dwelt amid them. Without undertaking to press too far this theory, or follow too far an analogy, may we not possibly believe that there is a relation between the passion for beauty which inspired the Greeks and the passion for liberty which distinguished them. It seems, at least, possible that such a relation exists as we contemplate the founding of this city on broad lines of beauty by those founders of our government who, putting aside all personal considerations, endeavored to establish here a city worthy to be the capital of a people whom they had created, as they believed, to be the custodians of human liberty throughout the ages. To make this city what its founders dreamed it might be, those who have its present and its future in charge must open their minds to the influences of that vision.

STAGE PICTURES

THE VISUAL APPEAL OF THE CONTEMPORARY DRAMA

BY CLAYTON HAMILTON

IT is a rather startling statement, yet one that may be easily maintained, that the art of the drama has more completely altered its methods during the last thirty years than in all of the preceding centuries that have intervened since Æschylus. Until the present period the drama told its story mainly to the ear. Nowadays it seeks to tell its story primarily to the eye. In all former ages the dramatist concerned himself with only two elements of narrative—the action and the characters; at the present time he concerns himself with three elements—the action, the characters, and the setting. This elevation of the element of setting to an importance co-ordinate with that of the elements of character and action, which has rendered the contemporary drama more visual in its appeal than the drama of

any earlier period, was occasioned by the combination of two causes, one of which was artistic and the other scientific, yet both of which tended toward that end which is the aim of every epoch-making revolution—namely, a return to nature.

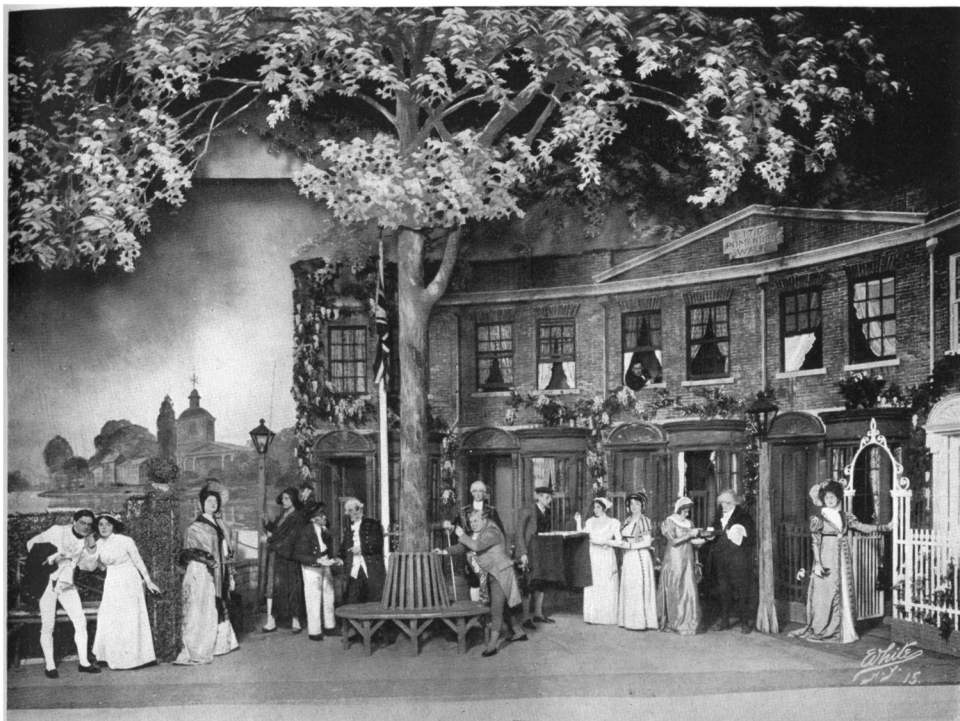
The first, or artistic, cause of the revolution in the drama had already been at work for a long time in the other arts to which the drama is allied. If we review the history of any of the arts which represent human beings, we shall notice that the one feature which distinguishes most clearly their ancient from their modern manifestations is the growing importance which has been bestowed in modern times upon the element of setting. Ancient art projects its figures abstractly, out of place, out of time; modern art projects them concretely, in a particular place, at a particular time.

Even in imagination we cannot localize the Venus of Melos; we are forced to look upon her with no sense of where or when. But we know that Saint Gaudens' Farragut is standing on the bridge of a ship and peering forward into the wind to direct the course of its progress; and we know that his Lincoln in Chicago has just risen from a chair upon the platform at a public assembly and is about to address the audience before him. The same distinction may be noted between ancient and modern painting. There is no background at all to the figures in Pompeian frescoes; we see a dozen Cupids dancing, but we derive no idea whether they are dancing on the green-sward or on a marble floor. Even in the great age of Italian painting the background is developed for a merely decorative purpose and is not brought into actual relation with the figures in the foreground. Leonardo's inscrutable background of jagged rocks and undetermined sky does not help us to decide whether Mona Lisa is actually indoors or out of doors; wherever she is, she is certainly not wandering through that lonely and uninhabitable vale. I doubt if any of the Italians ever painted a greater landscape than that which decorates the distance in the Castelfranco Madonna of Giorgione; but, in the actual and literal sense, that landscape has absolutely nothing to do with the Madonna herself or either of her two attendant saints. But the Dutch, who in this regard are the first of modern painters, chose to display their human figures in living relation to the landscape or comfortably at home in an interior belonging to them. In such a typical modern painting as the "Angelus" of Millet the people would lose all meaning if they were taken out of the landscape and the landscape would lose all meaning if it were divested of the people; the sense of a definite time and a definite place, which ancient art suppresses, are here as necessary to the picture as the people themselves or the act of devotion in which they are engaged. A similar revolution has been accomplished gradually in the art of literary narrative. The earliest tales in

the literature of every nation happen "once upon a time,"—it does not matter when, it hardly matters where. Medieval stories like the novelle of Boccaccio happen either out of doors in a conventional landscape or indoors in a conventional palace; but all palaces look alike, and every landscape is more decorative than habitable. It was only toward the end of the eighteenth century that novelists began to develop their settings in harmony with their action and their characters; and it was not until the nineteenth century that they began to insist that certain people can accomplish certain deeds only in a certain place and at a certain time. Such a story, for example, as Mr. Kipling's "An Habitation Enforced," in which the setting is the prime motive and (as it were) the hero of the tale, is exclusively characteristic of the present age of narrative and could never have been conceived in any former period.

It was inevitable that this growing sense of the importance of the element of setting as a necessary factor in human life, and therefore as an essential detail of art, should overtake the drama; but its conquest of the drama was deferred until the present age because at no earlier period was the theater adequately equipped to cope with the demands that it imposed. The second, or scientific, cause of the revolution in the drama was the great wave of practical invention which swept over the nineteenth century and made the modern theater possible. The introduction in quick succession of gas lamps, the calcium light, and electrical illumination, the consequent abolition of the "apron" stage, the invention of the "box-set," the new conception of the proscenium as a picture-frame and the stage itself as a picture placed within it, the growing zest for actuality in the appointments and the furniture of the set—these practical improvements in the theater had to be accomplished before the drama could follow the lead of all the other narrative arts in exhibiting characters in action with precise attention to particularities of time and place.

We derive from a typical Greek trag-

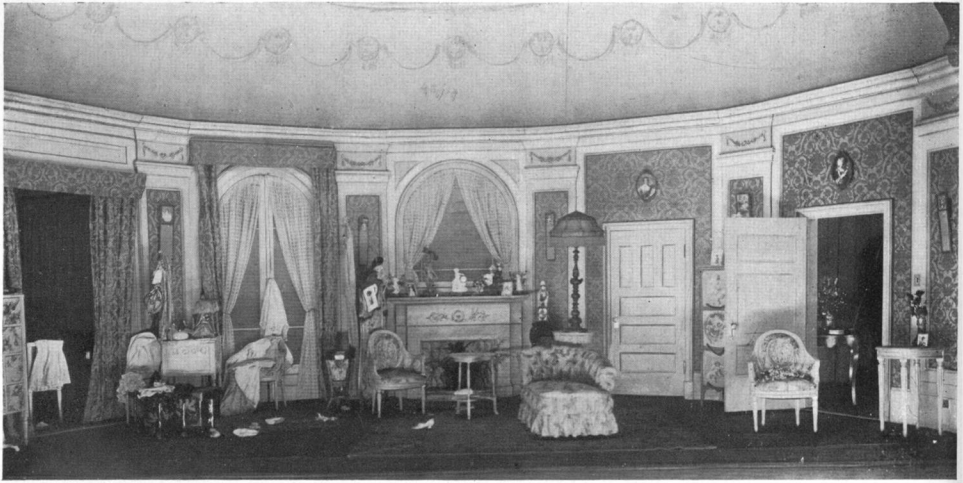


STAGE-SET OF "POMANDER WALK," BY LOUIS M. PARKER

edy no more definite sense of place and time than we derive from looking at the Venus of Melos. The action simply happens—we care not when or where. In most Elizabethan plays the action is exhibited merely as happening on the bare platform of the stage. When an actor walks upon the stage he walks into the story; when he leaves the stage he leaves the story, and we never ask where he has gone to. A few of the Elizabethans—and this is particularly true of Shakespeare—exhibit a truly modern feeling for setting as an influence on character and action; but since their theater was not equipped to represent setting to the eye, they were forced to suggest it to the imagination in passages of descriptive poetry. Whenever we need to know the exact place or the exact hour of a scene, Shakespeare has to tell us in his lines. He does it wonderfully—"How sweet the moonlight sleeps upon this bank," or "'Tis now the very witching time of night"; but on the modern stage

we do all this with scenery and lighting, and make the same effect directly, by pictorial, rather than indirectly, by literary, means. The tragedies of Corneille and Racine could all be played in a single stage-set—the conventional hall of a conventional palace. Molière, in his entire series of comedies and farces, used only three distinct stage-sets—one the public square of old Italian comedy in which are situated all the houses of all the leading characters, another conceived vaguely out of doors in the country, and the third representing a room in a house. When the action happens in a room, as in "Le Tartuffe," the set is not designed particularly to represent the personality of the man who owns the house nor the habits of the people who live in it. Furthermore, it is the only room in the whole house that is imagined to exist; and when a character leaves the stage he does not go into an adjacent room but walks bodily out of the story.

But for every act of every play in the



STAGE-SET OF THE LAST ACT OF "NOBODY'S WIDOW," BY AVERY HOPWOOD

contemporary theater we imagine a particular set that is entirely new and is devised especially to fit the action and to complement the characters. We know exactly what is beyond every door and every window; and when an actor passes through a door we know where he is going. We select and arrange the furniture for the insight it will give into the habits and the taste of the person to whom the room belongs. We keep a most careful accounting of time, and indicate its passage by minute gradations in the lighting. We convey as much as we possibly can by visual means, and we rely upon the lines only when the appeal to the eye has reached its limit.

It is an axiom of art that a new opportunity imposes a new obligation; and the artist in the modern theater is obliged to make his setting tell as much of his story as it can be made to tell. No better illustration of this point has been afforded in recent seasons than the novel and charming set devised by Mr. Louis N. Parker for his recent play, "Pomander Walk." A glance at the accompanying illustration will give a clearer idea of the essential quality of this comedy of happiness than could possibly be suggested by a lengthy literary summary of the plot. With this picture before us, it is only necessary for me to say for the benefit of readers who have missed

the pleasure of seeing this delicious comedy, that the five little Queen Anne houses arrayed in a crescent beside the loitering Thames are inhabited by the dozen or more delectable people wearing the picturesque old costumes of 1805 who are here exhibited; and the play is woven out of the humorous and sentimental threads of their several life-stories. Divested of its setting, this exquisite little piece could not possibly be presented; the play would lose all its meaning if it should lose its scenery. The other illustration which accompanies this article exhibits a room devised by Mr. David Belasco for the last act of Mr. Avery Hopwood's farcical romance entitled "Nobody's Widow." It is a room in a villa at Palm Beach. It is intended particularly to convey a sense of privacy, through which there subtly floats an insinuating aroma of femininity. Without offering any hint of the story of the play, I venture to ask the reader if this picture of an empty stage gives him any sense of the personality of the heroine and any suggestion of the sort of scene that may be enacted in this setting under dim light at the hushed and solitary hour of two a. m.

In the modern theater we have learned to convey abstract ideas by visual "business," as Mr. Thomas conveys his ideas about nervous and hysterical disease by

the "business" of the cat's-eye jewel in the last act of "The Witching Hour," or as he explains his theory of the influence of colors on the human temperament in the third act of "The Harvest Moon." We have learned to draw character completely to the eye, without the use of words, as Mr. Barrie, at the opening of "What Every Woman Knows," makes us fully acquainted with the personal traits of all three of Maggie's brothers in the three or four minutes that elapse before the first line of the play is spoken. In Herman Bahr's "The Concert," which is one of the best plays of the present season in New York, the theme and the entire story of the play are summed up and uttered eloquently to the eye in a period of protracted silence which culminates at the second curtain-fall.

Whereas the poetry of the drama was formerly expressed exclusively in the lines, it is now expressed mainly through the pictorial appurtenances of the stage. It is by no means true that the drama has lost its capacity for expressing poetry; it has merely altered its means of expressing it. Mr. Belasco's original one-act version of "Madam Butterfly" was fully as poetic as the Elizabethan plays of Fletcher, whose verse still haunts our ears with melody as it echoes through the silence of three centuries. Verse is only one of many means of communicating that mood which we understand as poetry; and Raphael, though he may

never have written a century of sonnets, is no less a poet than Ronsard. In my entire experience of theater-going I remember no more poetic moment in the theater than that moment in the first act of M. Maeterlinck's "Sister Beatrice," as it is produced at the New Theater in New York, when the Prince Bellidor appears to Beatrice through the opened doorway, and the audience looks afar through a tracery of half-imagined trees to a sky of blue awakening to gray and palpitant with a single throbbing star. Such a picture as this transcends the visual suggestion of even the best Elizabethan verse.

In Elizabethan times it was necessary that every playwright should be able to express himself in verse. Nowadays a different equipment is required for the task of making plays. The contemporary theater demands a vividness of visual imagination which has never in any other age been demanded of the dramatist. As the drama has reduced its reliance on the purely literary, it has increased its reliance on the purely pictorial; if it demands less of the imagination of the writer, it demands more of the imagination of the painter. Many of our modern plays fall more within the province of the critic of painting than within that of the critic of literature; and they call for the serious study of spectators whose interest is devoted primarily to the graphic arts.

A CITY PICTURE

MR. HASSAM'S LATEST PAINTING OF NEW YORK

BY ANNIE NATHAN MEYER

"OCTOBER HAZE: MANHATTAN" was first shown at the delightful exhibition of Luminists arranged for the Lotos Club of New York this winter. Among some of the finest examples of Monet, Pissarro, Sisley, and Boudin there was not one that possessed lovelier color or finer quality than this canvas

by Childe Hassam. The picture was lent by Mr. William T. Evans, who had just purchased it from the artist for his private collection.

Here we have that rare achievement—a picture of a city lifted far above mere topographical interest. Its beauty arrests attention before we realize it is a